



LOUISIANA SENATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

03.30.15

CONTACT: SEN. BROOME
225.359.9352

EAST BATON ROUGE AREA LEGISLATORS VOW TO CONTINUE FIGHT FOR HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR RESIDENTS

With the closure of the emergency room at Baton Rouge General Hospital Mid City imminent, North Baton Rouge area state legislators including, State Senators Sharon Weston Broome and Yvonne Dorsey Colomb and State Representatives Regina Barrow, Pat Smith, Ted James, Dalton Honore and Alfred C. Williams, issued the following statement regarding the closure and next steps to insure that citizens have continued access to health care services.

“For months we have worked tirelessly with other community leaders, citizen groups, hospital executives, the medical community, and state health and hospital officials to avoid the closure of Baton Rouge General’s emergency room in Mid City. Sadly those efforts were not successful. And while we are encouraged that the state along with its private hospital partner Our Lady of the Lake have made an effort to expand the health care services available to residents at both the LSU Mid City and North Baton Rouge clinics, we are convinced that will not be enough to protect the health, safety and welfare of tens of thousands of hard-working North Baton Rouge area residents.

What is particularly discouraging is that there are alternatives. Expansion of eligibility for the federally- funded Medicaid program would provide health care coverage to over 200,000 Louisiana citizens and ease the financial burden on health care providers and emergency rooms who now care for those uninsured. It is working in other states, like Arkansas, and it can work here.

Another option is to re-think the state’s partnership with Our Lady of the Lake Hospital to provide additional state financial support for those hospitals and healthcare providers who treat the uninsured outside the public-private partnership agreement. A direct appropriation to those other hospitals that are impacted by the changing health care landscape should also be considered.

Anyone who thinks that the closure of the Baton Rouge General Mid City emergency room will not have a ripple effect across not only East Baton Rouge but surrounding parishes as well is not grounded in reality. The effect of the closure will not only impact those who have depended on those services but anyone who is need of emergency health care services in the region, regardless of their insurance status or geographical location. For many it may be a matter of life or death.

As state legislators and proud residents of East Baton Rouge Parish, we will continue to fight and advocate for a health care system that preserves the lives and livelihoods of our parish, our communities, our neighborhoods and our families.”

###